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FROM THE JAPANESE OF THE
MANYOSHIU.

Once, when the days of spring were filled with haze, I wandered forth upon the beach of Suminoe, and as I watched the fishing-boats that floated by me my thoughts turned to an event of the past. How the son of Urashima of Mizunoe, proud of his skill in catching katsuwo and tai, rowed away from his home and out beyond the bounds of the ocean.

For seven days he rowed, and on the seventh he was met by a daughter of the god who rules the world beneath the sea.

When the end of their caresses had come they descended to the eternal world, and entered, hand in hand, into a marvellous dwelling in the enclosure of the sea-god's palace, there to live for all time, never growing old and never dying.

But soon the foolish mortal spoke thus to his wife:—

"For a short time I would revisit the earth, to see my father and mother, and to speak to them, but to-morrow I shall return to you."

Then she answered him:—

"If you are ever again to see the immortal land or to live with me, in no way, even so much as in a dream, open this casket." And thus she commanded that he should act.

When he arrived at Suminoe, though he looked about him for his house, nowhere could it be seen; and though he looked about him for the village, that also he could nowhere find.

Then he said to himself: "It is strange that, though I have been absent but three years, the house should have disappeared, and that not even a fence remains. If I open this box, and look in it, will the house exist as before?"

He opened the casket a little, and there came from it a white cloud, which floated away toward the spirit-land and disappeared.

When he saw this he ran, he shouted, he waved his sleeves, he rolled upon the beach and ground his feet together.

Suddenly he felt his strength departing from him; his body, that a moment before had been young, became old and wrinkled; his hair, that had been black, became white; and night by night his breath became weaker, until at last it ceased.

And now, from where I stand, I can see the grave of the son of Urashima.

ARTHUR TAYLOR KNAPP.